



Drug-Free and Zero-Tolerance Policies at Work

Presented by Attorney
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Why Have Drug-Free & Zero-Tolerance Policies?

**Water treatment plant operators face many hazards every day —
Zero-tolerance policies help ensure plant & worker safety.**

- Environmental Protection

Water treatment removes contaminants from water, which helps protect natural bodies of water like rivers, lakes, and streams.

- Human Health

Water treatment makes water safe to drink and use for other purposes.

- Sustainability

Good water management aims to minimize water use and waste and maximize water reuse and recycling.

Why Have Drug-Free & Zero-Tolerance Policies?

- Good water management aims to **minimize water use and waste** and **maximize water reuse and recycling**.
- Water treatment plants **remove contaminants** such as bacteria, viruses, heavy metals, and other dissolved solids from water sources.

Water treatment
can eliminate up to
90%
of bacteria and
pollutants.

Respect the Work Environment

Water plants pose safety hazards & hidden dangers



Strategies to Control Risks

1. Promote Hazard Awareness.

- Ensure operators are familiar with hazard recognition techniques, communicate known hazards clearly, and know the proper way to perform dangerous tasks.

2. Training.

- Increase staff skill level so they to are better able to perform tasks.

3. Accommodate Physical Limitations.

- Foster an environment where everyone can contribute. If needed, shift tasks to those who are more able to perform them safely.

Strategies to Control Risks *(continued)*

4. Make Safety an Expectation.

- Do not tolerate shortcuts or unsafe practices. Safe behavior is always expected, nothing less is tolerated.

5. Team Approach.

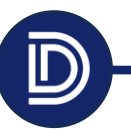
- Personal engagement is an investment in quality. Acknowledge participants.

6. Positive Reinforcement.

- Use real examples to commend teams and inspire similar behaviors.

7. Hold People Accountable.

- Having no enforcement is the same as having no policy.



Identify Work Environment Hazards & Dangers





Confined Spaces

- Confined spaces cause oxygen deficiency.
- Tanks, pits, and manholes can be dangerous due to the risk of asphyxiation, engulfment, and entrapment.
- Confined spaces can trap deadly gases, especially if the space is used to store or process chemicals.
- Toxic atmospheres can cause unconsciousness, impaired judgment, or death.



Mechanical Hazards

- Machinery can include moving parts, heavy loads, and high-pressure systems, which can lead to equipment malfunctions, entanglements, and crushing injuries.
- High pressure systems risk burns for the workers due to steam, hot vapors, and solvents.



Electrical Hazards

- Power sources, tools, cables, and equipment can cause electric shock or electrocution.
- Faulty wiring or other electrical issues allow electricity to leak into the water.
- Aging electrical wiring that has not been inspected or updated can also allow electricity to leak into the water.



Fires or Explosions

- Flammable vapors and increased oxygen levels can lead to fires or explosions, which can cause burns, loss of consciousness, and other serious injuries.
- Leaking chemicals can result in burns, mucous membrane irritation, and bronchial and asthma issues.



Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Wet floors, airborne moisture, humidity, and overflow can make it easy to slip, trip, and/or fall.
- Sludge tanks can combine slip-trip hazards with untreated water and sewage in the waters below.



Drowning

- Workers are in eminent danger of slipping and falling, resulting in drowning.
- Lone workers may be at a higher risk of drowning because there may not be anyone nearby to help in an emergency.
- If someone falls into cold water, they can enter a phase of cold incapacitation where their muscles become exhausted, and they can no longer keep their head above water.



Trench Collapses

- Trench collapses can crush a worker and be fatal. Causes include:
- Soil conditions: The type of soil, its water content, and how it changes with weather can all contribute to a collapse. Clay can also expand and then collapse.
- Improper installation: Trenches that are not installed correctly can be more likely to collapse.



Trench Collapses *(continued)*

- Excess water: Too much water in the area, such as stormwater runoff or wastewater, can overwhelm the trench.
- Compaction: Heavy vehicles, large animals, or frequent foot traffic can compact the trench, making it more likely to collapse.



Trench Collapses *(continued)*

- Blocked trenches: A protective layer can fail, allowing dirt and debris to get into the trench. Sludge and scum from the septic tank can also flow into the trench and cause a blockage.
- Root intrusion: Large plants or trees that are too close to the trench can cause problems.



Exposure to Bioaerosols

- Bioaerosols can contain microorganisms that can cause the skin, digestive system, respiratory, and nervous system diseases, and diarrhea, and allergies.



Medical Emergencies

- Medical emergencies are common risks associated with working in confined spaces.
- Risks also include eye injuries, hearing damage and resistance to antibiotics.



Chemical Leaks

- Chemical leaks can cause significant problems in water systems by directly contaminating the water supply with harmful substances.
- Leaking causes health issues for people and animals who consume the water.
- Leaking chemicals disrupts the ecosystem and aquatic life.
- Depending on the chemical, pipes and infrastructure can be damaged through corrosion, further compromising water quality and distribution.

Incidents Can Happen Suddenly

- Confined space incidents can happen suddenly, often without any warning.
- Permit-required confined spaces are characterized as high-risk workplaces, requiring regulatory permits and strict entry and safety procedures.
- Employers must take the necessary steps to ensure worker safety around confined spaces.

Adding Up the Hazards





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Adding Up the Hazards

- Every job has inherent risk.
- **However**, wastewater treatment plant employees face potentially dangerous situations every day.

Training and use of safety protocol is paramount in the efficient management of the facility and the workers' well-being.



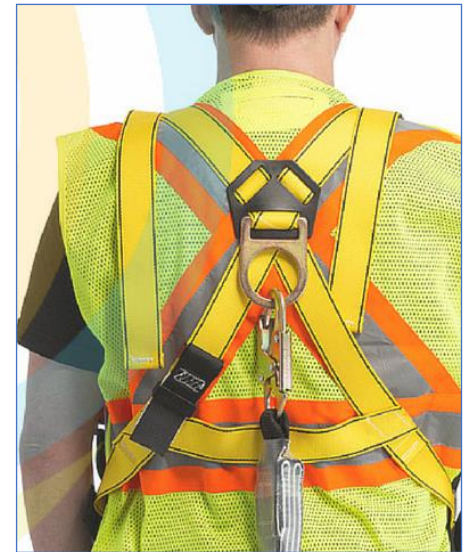
Adding Up the Hazards *(continued)*

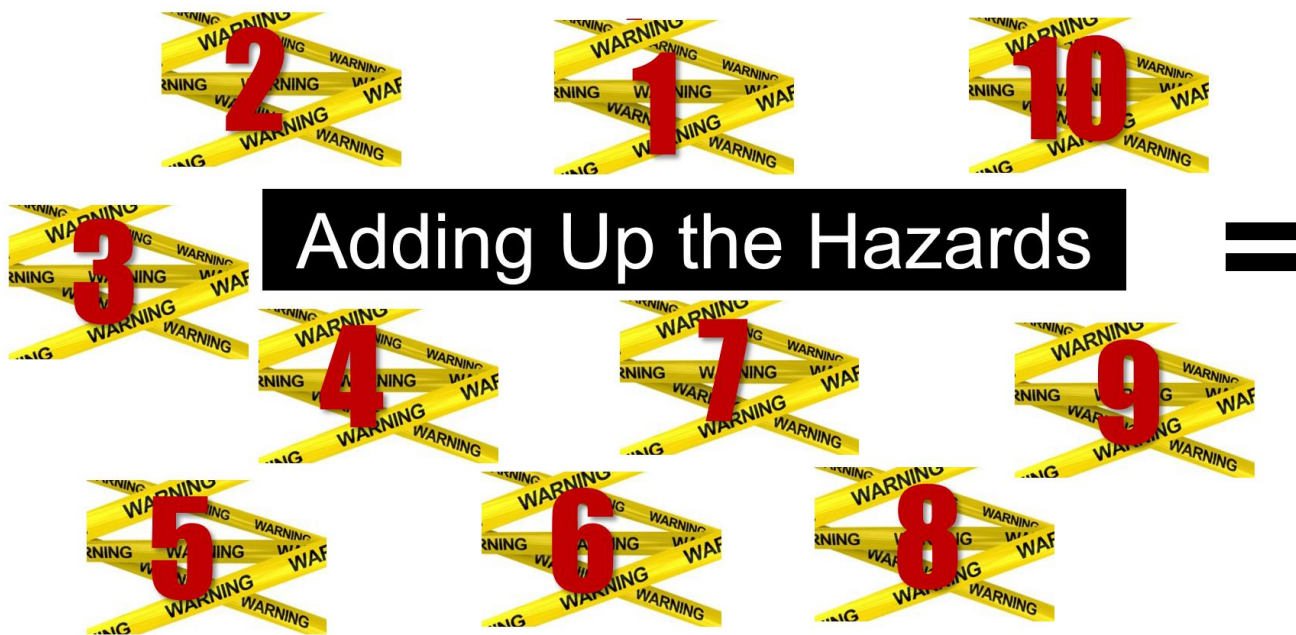


- Generally, if people are unaware of the true danger of an activity, they consider it less risky than it really is.
- Increasing awareness of the dangers can lead to a change in behavior.

Take Measures to Reduce Accidents

- Use a safety lanyard with a shock-absorbing feature.
- Wear safety glasses, gloves, and hearing protection.
- Follow proper procedures and techniques.
- Communicate with others.
- Have personnel trained in first aid and CPR.





Drug-Free
and
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Policies
at Work

Why Institute a Drug-Free Policy?

- Policies hold workers accountable.
- Employees who frequently use drugs or alcohol tend to miss work or run late more often than non-users.
- Employees who use drugs are twice as likely to change employers three or more times in a year than non-users.

Why Institute a Drug-Free Policy?



Employers who show a commitment to workers to maintain a safe and healthy work environment demonstrate a promise of caring for employees by improving their working conditions.

Why Institute a Drug-Free Policy?



Educate employees about the safety risks that drug and alcohol use imposes on their fellow employees.

Emphasize the costs associated with drug and alcohol use:

1. The company's bottom line.
2. Loss of productivity, absenteeism.
3. Increased healthcare costs.

Defining a Drug-Free Policy


Include All Rules in the Employee Handbook.

- Employees are prohibited from unlawfully consuming, distributing, possessing, selling, or using controlled substances while on duty.
- Employees may not be under the influence of any controlled substance, such as drugs or alcohol, while at work, on company premises, or engaged in company business.

Defining a Drug-Free Policy *(continued)*

- Prescription or over-the-counter medications, taken as prescribed, are usually an exception to a policy. If uncertain, employees should check with HR.
- Anyone violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Benefits of Drug-Free Policies

- Reduce workplace injuries.
 - Lower absenteeism.
 - Fewer accidents.
 - Less filings for workers' compensation.
- 
- Less incident paperwork for HR management.
 - Saves production time, reduces cost, and improves corporate profits.

Benefits of Drug-Free Policies

- By implementing a drug-free workplace program, the corporation shows a commitment to having a safe, healthy work environment.
- Additional benefits can include improved:
 - Employee morale (Everyone plays by the same rules).
 - Creativity (Employees feel empowered to make suggestions).
 - Emotional stability (Comfort, since employees' lives are on the line).

Null

NaDa

Nought

Zero-Tolerance!

Bupkis

Zilch

Nil

Zip

Goose Egg

Diddly-squat

Violate the Drug-Free Policy?

- Anyone violating the policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



In Closing

- Small mishaps turning into disastrous events is a reality in wastewater treatment facilities.
- Employees must be trained very well, and often, in the massive array of safety protocols.
- Responsible and experienced management, with a focus on safety, is essential to keeping employees and the communities safe.

Thank You



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